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ABSTRACT

In order to learn the status of bilingual (Spanish/English) reading programs in New Jersey just before the implementation of a new bilingual education law in July 1975, a survey was conducted of school districts reporting a student body consisting of more than five percent Spanish-surnamed students. This document contains tables and discussions of the responses to questions regarding educational levels of bilingual programs, subject areas taught in the native language, percentage of the school day spent using Spanish, time spent on instruction in English as a second language, placement of children in bilingual programs, tests to determine language proficiency, reading programs (Spanish/English) provided at each level, English and Spanish reading materials in use, and assessment of reading achievement in English and Spanish. The document also describes a model in beginning reading for bilingual students. A list of references and a copy of the questionnaire are included. (JM)

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TEACHING SPANISH-SPEAKING CHILDREN TO READ IN NEW JERSEY

The Spanish-speaking child is perhaps the most seriously disadvantaged in our New Jersey schools today. Puerto Ricans, who make up the largest segment of our Spanish-speaking population, are dropping out of school at a rate four times that of whites and twice that of blacks ("The Puerto Rican Experience" NJEA Review, May, 1974). It follows that these people are severely depressed economically with a median family income ($6,469.) that is 44 per cent less than that of Anglo-whites and 17 per cent less than that of blacks.

Basic literacy skills are essential to social economic mobility. Apparently, our schools have been failing this most recent influx of foreign-speaking children. Since 1970 there has been strong support for mother tongue instruction in beginning reading (Feeley, 1970) and bilingual/bicultural education (Waggoner, 1974; Wheat, 1974; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975, Saville-Troike, 1975) as an approach to developing literacy in Spanish-speaking groups.

The recent Supreme Court decision involving the San Francisco schools (Lau vs. Nichols, 1974) says that school districts must take affirmative steps to help children who do not speak English.

On January 8, 1975, the Bilingual Education Act, implementing the Lau decision in New Jersey, was passed by the state legislature. This law states that districts having 20 or more pupils of limited English-speaking ability in any one language classification must provide a bilingual education program for those children. This mandate became effective on July 1, 1975.

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In order to find out the status of bilingual (Spanish-English) reading programs in the state just prior to the implementation date of this new legislation, with an eye toward recommending a workable model, a survey was made in Spring, 1973, of school districts reporting more than 5 percent Spanish-surnamed students. The information for Table 1 was taken from Castellanos, 1973, pg. 17 and 18; starred districts responded either by mail or interview to the general information survey form (Appendix A), or shared recent evaluation reports.

Table 1

New Jersey Districts Reporting a Five Percent Spanish-Surnamed School Population

	SCHOOL DISTRICT	PERCENTAGE
	West New York	73%
*	Union City	61%
	Hoboken	56%
*	Perth Amboy	45%
	Woodbine	33%
*	Passaic	31%
	Weehawken	23%
*	Paterson	22%
*	Elizabeth	19%
	Vineland	19%
*	Dover	18%
*	Jersey City	17%
	Mullica	16%
*	Newark	15%
*	Camden	14%
	Bunea	12%
*	New Brunswick	12%
*	Lakewood	10%
	Hammonton	10%
	Long Branch	9%
*	North Bergen	9%
*	Trenton	8%
*	Keyport	7%
	Wayne	7%
	Carteret	7%
	Irvington	6%
	Pemberton	6%
*	Asbury Park	6%
	Jackson	6%
*	Atlantic City	5%

RESULTS

Of the slightly more than 50 perccent which responded, five reported no bilingual programs at that time. This finding, plus the apathy that prompted 14 districts to not even reply after follow-up mailings, points out why government must step in to force attention upon pressing educational needs. Now all these districts must mount bilingual programs.

Descriptions of Programs

Table 2 indicates that most bilingual programs were based in the elementary (k to 8) grades. Only four districts (Elizabeth, New Brunswick, Trenton, and Camden) reported having junior/senior high school programs. Atlantic City has a new Kindergarten-Grade One program.

According to Table 3 reading and math were most likely to be taught in the native language. Social Studies and science were the next most frequently mentioned. This is probably because text materials may be most easily found in these areas. Also, it is usually recommended that "non-cognitive" areas like music, art, and physical education be conducted in English (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975). New Brunswick reported the most complete high school offerings: math, social studies, science, business, and language.

Table 2

What educational levels does your program provide for?

Level	N*
Bilingual	
Primary only	1
Elementary grades	9
Jr.-Sr. High School	4
E.S.L. Only	
Primary only	1
K-12	2

Table 3

What subject areas are taught in the native language?

Subject	N*
Reading	10
Mathematics	10
Social Studies	8
Science	7
Arts	2
Business	1

* N.B.

Throughout this report total numbers of responses will be inconsistent because respondents did not always choose to answer all questions or gave multiple answers to some that could be answered in that way.

Tables 4 and 5 show how much time was spent using the Spanish language and how much time was devoted to English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. Spanish was used from 40% to 80% of the school day, with four districts reporting a 50-50 split. Paterson described its program as being more in Spanish in the primary with a shift to more English in the middle grades. ESL instruction ranged from ½ hour per day to 1½ hours per day with four districts reporting 3/4 of an hour per day.

Table 4

How much of the day is spent using Spanish?

% of Day	N
80	1
75	1
60	1
50	4
40	1

Table 5

How much time is spent on ESL instruction?

Number of Hours	N
1½ hours	3
1 hour	2
3/4 hour	4
½ hour	2

While most bilingual programs tend to keep the languages separate, New Brunswick is experimenting with a concurrent (Spanish-English) approach to beginning reading. Project Sell in Union City reinforces content areas taught in Spanish in the morning by reviewing concepts taught in the afternoon in English. There is no apparent consensus of opinion as to the effectiveness of concurrent instruction (Anderson and Bayer, 1970, p. 100; Mackey, 1972, pp. 60-71).

Table 6 shows that most districts depend upon the results of language proficiency tests and teacher recommendations to place children in their bilingual programs. Several mentioned using both of these approaches or other combinations. The most frequently used language proficiency tests appear to be informal, teacher-constructed measures and Title I ESL Assessment forms (Table 7). A few districts use published tests like the John Bailey Language Facility Test and Inter-American Series. One district, Paterson, is experimenting with the new (1973) Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Bilingual Syntax Measure.

Table 6

How do you determine who should be in your program?

Methods	N
Language proficiency tests	10
Teacher recommendation	6
Oral interviews	3
Needs assessment of child	1
Parents' preference	1

Table 7

What tests are used to determine command of English?

Test	N
Informal language proficiency tests	10
Title One ESL Assessment	3
John Baily Language Facility Test	3
Inter-American Series	2
Puerto Rican Test Series	1
Bilingual Syntax Measure - Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich	1

This reliance on locally developed, informal tests is not uncommon. Galvan (1975) sees this as a predictable outcome of the lack of a central collection center for published language proficiency tests. He cites the attempt of

Dr. Thomas D. Horn to establish such a center at the University of Texas at Austin. Known as The Oral Language Test Collection: Test Critiques and Retrieval System, this center would attempt to store information and critical reviews of the tests so that consumers might easily select the best instrument for their needs. A working list of 54 language proficiency tests had been collected as of May, 1975. Funding priorities will eventurlly decide the fate of the project.

As for the duration of time in bilingual classes, all respondents indicated that their programs would carry children more than two years; many said "as long as needed." Apparently, these districts were anticipating the new state law which specifies a three-year period.

Bilingual Reading Approaches

Since a major goal of this study was to suggest a model for bilingual reading rrograms, participants were asked to describe their presentpprograms. It must be emphasized that this information was solicited before the new bilingual education law went into effect. These descriptions represent what the districts were doing prior to inforced bilingual education.

Table 8 summarizes the information offered in response to items one to four on Part III of the questionnaire in which participants were asked to indicate whether reading was taught in English, Spanish, or both on the various educational levels. It is assumed that those respondents who did not indicate any special program in English for bilinguals on the kindergarten level place these children in regular kindergarten situations.

Table 8

Reading Programs (English/Spanish) Provided at Each Level

	Ktgn.		Primary		Middle Grades		Jr.-Sr. HS	
	Eng.	Span.	Eng.	Span.	Eng.	Span.	Eng.	Span.
New Brunswick			X	X	X	X	X	X
Atlantic City		X	X	X				
Camden		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Asbury Park	X		X		X			
Elizabeth	X		X	X			X	X
Keyport	X		X		X		X	
Newark			X	X	X	X		
Paterson		X	X	X	X	X		
Passaic			X	X	X	X		
Perth Ambey		X	X	X	X	X		
Trenton			X	X	X	X	X	X
Union City *			X	X	X	X		
Lakewood * (project sch)	X	X	X	X	X	X		

* Information on these two districts was gleaned from project evaluations rather than from the survey form in Appendix A since these districts did not return the survey but did share their current evaluation reports.

For their language-different kindergarteners, Asbury Park and Elizabeth mentioned using SWRL (South West Regional Laboratory) materials while Keyport said they used Miami Linguistic readers and Scott Foresman materials. Lakewood, who was participating in Follow-Through, has adapted the University of Arizona, Tucson Early Education Model (TEEM) for all its kindergartens. Bilinguals participated in this program and in Spanish readiness exercises (Cohen et al., 1975, p. 8).

Besides Lakewood, others with Spanish language programs in kindergarten are: Atlantic City (Laidlaw and La Escuela Nueva); Camden (Laidlaw and Santillana); Paterson (Santillana); and Perth Amboy.

It is interesting to note that only five, or one third, of the responding districts reported having Spanish-language programs in kindergarten in Spring of 1975. Since language development has traditionally been one of the major goals of kindergarten, it might be assumed that here would be the logical place for beginning bilingual education. Horn (1966) found that many of the children in early bilingual projects in Texas were actually "alingual," with even their native language being underdeveloped. New York City (1965) has recommended bilingual kindergartens that stressed readiness in both languages.

As seen in Table 8, bilingual reading programs in New Jersey were most frequently implemented in the primary grades with many extending into the middle grades. One factor that probably gave impetus to programs at these levels is the availability of materials. Unlike earlier programs (Feeley, 1969) that had to depend on South America, Puerto Rico, and even Spain for Spanish language basal materials, today American publishers are producing for this market. Table 9 lists the materials by frequency of mention.

Generally, respondents described their reading programs in terms of the published series being used. Among Spanish series, Laidlaw is the most popular, perhaps because it is the oldest. Santillana is beginning to show up, either complementing or replacing Laidlaw. As mentioned above, New Brunswick is experimenting with Open Court for simultaneously beginning reading in both languages. A wide range of basal materials are used for the reading-in-English component with Miami Linguistic most frequently mentioned.

Table 9

Reading Materials Used in Bilingual Programs

Spanish Materials	N
Laidlaw	10
Santillana	3
Open Court	1
La Lingua Espanola	1
Bonar	1
El Hablo de mi Tierra (Spanish language arts for Jr.-Sr. High School)	1

English Materials	N
Miami Linguistic	4
Distar	2
Scott Foresman	2
Ginn 360	2
SWRL	22
Lado English Series (Jr.-Sr. High School)	2
Open Court	1
Bank Street	1
Lippincott	1
Sullivan BRL	1
Merrill Linguistic	1

Although only four districts (Elizabeth, New Brunswick, Trenton, and Camden) reported bilingual reading programs beyond the elementary level, it may be assumed that English reading and ESL programs are provided according to need by all the

listed districts. Just as with the regular kindergarten programs, they probably didn't indicate this on the survey sheet because such programs are usually taken for granted.

Since accountability and evaluation are key concerns at present, the survey asked participants how they assessed growth in reading in both Spanish and English. Table 10 shows that the Puerto Rican Battery and Inter-American Tests of Reading were the most popular published tests; several districts reported using locally developed or informal basal reader tests. Only one district, Passaic, indicated that they used an informal reading inventory.

Table 10

How Reading Achievement is Assessed in Spanish and English

Tests of Reading Achievement (Spanish)	N
Puerto Rican Battery	5
Inter-American Tests of Reading	4
Teacher made informal tests	3
Reading series tests	2
Informal Reading Inventory	1

Tests of Reading Achievement (English)	
Teacher Made informal tests	5
Puerto Rican Battery	5
Inter-American Tests of Reading	4
Metropolitan Achievement Tests	3
California Achievement Tests	2
Iowa Tests of Basic Skills	1
S.R.A. Reading Achievement	1
Gates MacGinitie Reading Tests	1

The appropriateness of the Puerto Rican Battery and the Inter-American Tests may be questioned for Spanish-English bilinguals in New Jersey. The former was developed for and normed on children in Puerto Rican schools; the latter were developed by Herschel Manuel (1965) who has worked mainly with

Mexican-Americans. It would seem that tests published by producers of basals would at least measure the degree to which children were succeeding with their materials. Informal reading inventories (Spanish and English), graded selections which children read orally and/or silently, would appear to be one of the better ways of assessing performance and competency in reading in both languages.

Evaluation and testing remain areas for development. The evaluation reports reviewed in this study showed weaknesses in design and instrumentation. Apparently, this is a national problem, discussed in length by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1975, pp. 103-136). They state that often the success of bilingual programs has been based solely on the children's progress in English. This has been compared with progress made by ESL groups and monolingual groups, without consideration for the amount of time spent in English instruction. The Commission (1975, pp. 130-131) states:

> For the same reason, content area achievement cannot be measured through English in the early grades. Research is needed to determine at what point children in bilingual programs can be expected to take state or nationally - normed standardized tests, which assume knowledge of English. . . Comprehensive native and English language assessment instruments are desperately needed. . .

The Commission (p. 105) recommends informal assessment approaches in the interim and suggests an over-all evaluation plan that is comprehensive in nature, including (1) pre-program assessment; (2) process evaluation; and (3) outcome evaluation.

Research design models that adequately show program effects also need to be developed. Present designs show lacks in the same areas as those cited by Jackson (1975, p. 628) such as inadequate sampling; failure to adequately define and control treatments; failure to consider interaction effects between treatments and general characteristics of subjects (IQ, sex, social class, achievement); failure

to look at longitudinal as well as short-term effects of programms.

Evaluation instruments and design models remain areas for continued research and development. Projects like the language test retrieval system proposed by Horn at the University of Texas are one step in the right direction.

BEGINNING READING FOR BILINGUALS: A SUGGESTED MODEL

As evidenced from the above information, many New Jersey districts, even before they were required by law, were trying to put into practice the best current suggestions of linguists, psycholingusts, and developmental psychologists by developing literacy in the native language as well as in English. Fears that bilingual programs would inhibit children's acquisition of English language skills seemed to have been overcome. In fact, research evidence that this is not so is fast accumulating (Fishman, 1972; Ramiriz, 1974; Ramiriz and Politzer, 1974; Ramiriz and Politzer, 1975). Proficiency in Spanish appears to be related to its use at home and proficiency in English is related to exposure to English in school and community and especially to English instruction in school. So, making the child literate in his own language while he is developing oral-aural skills in English will not detract from his learning of English. In fact, some basic reading skills (sound-symbol relationships; concept of a word, a sentence; left-to-right directionality; print as communication, as language written down) can be transferred to reading in English as soon as children have some receptive control of this second language.

These New Jersey districts have accepted that challenge, but they have developed diverse models of implementation. Few seem to start native language literacy programs in kindergarten. It would seem that this should be the place to begin.

In his film "Teaching Reading to Spanish Speakers," Ramiriz (1975) gives a visual report of a bilingual reading program developed in the Region One Curriculum

Center in Edinburgh, Texas. Kindergarten children began reading in Spanish via "sharing" time. This was essentially a language experience approach (LEA), since the teacher wrote on charts the dictated sentences which were then read by the children. In first and second grades, the "sharing" stories were gradually told and recorded in English.

Spanish reading was continued in first grade with Spanish language materials and phonics-spelling activities through which children learned to manipulate letters to build common words and sentences. Because a strong aural-oral English language program was conducted simultaneously all through kindergarten and first grade, the children were soon using the manipulative letters to encode English words and sentence patterns. This, plus their LEA stories in English, was their introduction to reading in English.

O'Brien (1973) too, recommends an LEA beginning approach to reading in English. She cites the advantage of this "speech to symbol" procedure.

> Too many times the second language learner is thrust into a process requiring him to decode a symbol representing a speech sound that simply does not exist in his speech repertoire. Most phonological systems are based on the assumption that the child can match English symbols to known speech sounds. This false assumption accounts for the failure of many phonic programs to produce any significant results among bilingual students (p. 105).

Despite this rather obvious weakness in strong phonics approaches for teaching the language-different to read English, many New Jersey districts reported using decoding-emphasis systems (See Table 9, p. 9).

Others (McCracken and McCracken, 1972; Ashton-Warner, 1963; Hall, 1970; Stauffer, 1970; and Veatch et al., 1973) have offered variations of the language experience approach for introducing reading in English. The main advantage seems to be that the concepts, vocabulary, grammar, and sound/graphic print that the ESL speaker is asked to read will be within his receptive and productive control of English. As Van Allen and Van Allen (1966) point out, LEA is based on an "I" rationale:

What I can think about I can say.
What I can write I can read.
I can read what I can write,
and what others have written for me.

No New Jersey district reported using LEA in their bilingual reading programs. However, some teachers are probably using it intuitively anyway. During an on-site visit to one first grade, the writer did notice the teacher encouraging children to write a word or two about their drawings, but when it came to scheduled "reading time," the children's words were put away and published materials were used exclusively.

O'Brien (1973, p. 106) stresses the need for continued oral-aural English development to support the LEA activities since the language-different child cannot always "say what he can think about" in English.

The Texas Region One Curriculum Center also demonstrates an activity-centered, English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) kindergarten in film (Ramirez, 1975). The oral language-thinking activities are pursued in free play and in structured situations stressing ESL pattern practice techniques. This offers a good model for primary ESL programs which are prerequisite to beginning reading in English. Goodman (1970), states that readers need to be able to predict words as they sample text, using sound/symbol, grammar, and semantic cues. Children learning their native language have already internalized phonological, grammar, and semantic (vocabulary) information about their language. The second-language-learner must move through the listening-speaking stages before moving to reading a new language.

To summarize, this paper suggests a beginning reading model for children who are native speakers of Spanish that features:

1. Beginning reading in Spanish via language experience approaches in kindergarten;
2. Continute reading in Spanish language basal materials in first grade;
3. Stress on encoding with manipulative letters and writing to extend LEA group and individual activities to independent spelling and composing in Spanish;
4. Aural-oral English activities, structured and informal, to establish receptive control and thinking ability in English in kindergarten and there after according to need;
5. Beginning reading in English in first grade via LEA charts and stories, utilizing structures and vocabulary children can handle receptively and orally thus building a basic sight vocabulary in English;
6. Continued reading in Spanish through grades one and two until the English LEA program can be phased into English basal materials;
7. Encourage encoding to extend speech-to-symbol spelling to English, transferring skills already learned in Spanish;
8. Stress meaningful reading of English from the beginning rather than the sounding out of letters and words that may sound like reading but actually be no more than surface-level decoding.

The above model, based on those suggested by the Texas Region One Curriculum Center and O'Brien (1973), is offered to New Jersey districts seeking to develop a precious resource -- true bilinguals, who can think and read in two languages. According to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1975, p. 55):

> . . . Bilingual bicultural education capitalizes on the native language skills children already have. From a psychological standpoint, the educational and emotional benefits of, first, successfully learning to read and, second, of learning to read in the native language contribute to development of a

positive self-concept, which in turn contributes to success in school. Once the child has learned to read in the native language, learning to read a second language should present no great problem because basic reading skills are transferrable.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Survey of Bilingual Programs in New Jersey

Coordinator:

Address:

Telephone: _____

I. 1. What percent of the children in your district are non-English speaking or bilingual?

Elementary _____ Middle Sch./Jr. High _____ High Sch._____

2. What is the dominant second language? _____

II. Bilingual Program Description

1. How do you determine who will be in the program?

_____

2. What ages does your program provide for?

_____

3. What subject areas are taught in the native language?

Elementary _____

Middle Sch./Jr. High _____

High School _____

4. Approximately how much time per school day is spent in classes conducted in the native language? _____

5. Approximately how much time per school day is spent in classes conducted in English? _____

6. Approximately how much time per school day do children spend in English-as-a-Second-Language instruction? _____

7. How long is a child carried in a bilingual program? (Circle one)

less than 1 year 1 year 2 years more than 2 years

EXPLAIN _____

_____

8. How do you assess the child's command of English? (Names of tests and instruments used)?

_____
_____
_____

9. How do you fund your program? (% federal, state, local funds). _____
_____
_____

III. Description of Reading Programs for Bilinguals

1. Pre-reading (Nursery-Ktgn.)

_____
_____

2. Beginning Reading (Ktgn.-1st grades) Circle one:

Reading in Native Language / Reading in English / Both / Other
Explain, including names of commercial materials used:

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Middle-Grades (4 to 6) Circle one:

Reading in Native Language / Reading in English / Both / Other
Explain, including names of commercial materials used:

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Junior-High/Senior High Cricle one:

Reading in Native Language / Reading in English / Both / Other
Explain, including names of commercial materials used:

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. How do you assess children's reading ability? (Names of tests, instruments used)?
Reading Achievement in Native Language:

Reading in English:
Readiness

Achievement - Primary

Achievement - Elementary

Achievement - Jr.-Sr. High School

7. Would it be possible for me to visit some reading classes conducted with your bilingual children? (Circle one)

Yes No

Person to contact to arrange visit:

Name _____

Title _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

If you have questions about the above survey, call:

Dr. Joan T. Feeley
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(201) 881-2227
or
(201) 881-2216